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All photos courtesy Pella Convention & Visitors Bureau

By Renee Brincks

On a sunny spring afternoon, few places are prettier than Pella's town square. In one corner, blades turn atop a walk-in windmill where visitors stop for information about the town's treasures. Trees shade the edges of the square, and sidewalks pass by a fountain, a sundial, and several benches inviting those on foot to sit down and soak it all in. The Tulip Toren, a tower that honors the annual Tulip Time celebration and serves as a stage for community events, stands tall above it all. And, each spring, vibrant tulip beds burst into bloom here and throughout town.

The square is at the heart of a storied downtown populated by bakeries, boutiques, cafes and small businesses that really put Pella on the map. It's often tied to tulips, windmills and, inevitably, those famed and oh, so delicious Dutch letters. But, the central Iowa town really is more than just spring colors and Dutch delights. Pella is one of those lovely communities lucky to be defined by a great number of positives.

"We're located right next door to Lake Red Rock, Iowa's largest lake," says Jill Vandervoort, director of the Pella Convention and Visitors Bureau.





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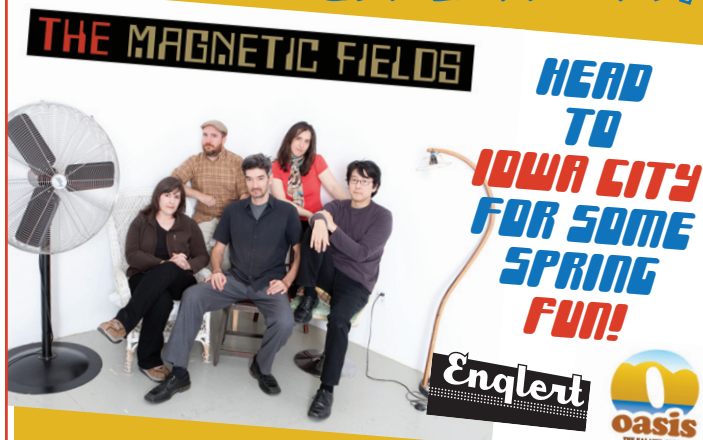
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"That means there are recreational activities for travelers of every age group."

A mile-long dam controls the 19,000-acre lake on the Des Moines River, creating opportunities for boating, bicycling, camping, fishing, and bird watching. Bald eagles frequent the water and its surrounding habitat, as do 300 types of birds and 36 species of mammals. The newly renovated North Overlook and two other lakeside beaches get busy each summer, and a 100-foot observation tower at Cordova Park, on the lake's north side, offers terrific views.

Still, there's no denying the town's heritage. Pella's signature Dutch traditions date back to 1847, when Hendrik Pieter Scholte led families from the Netherlands to Iowa to escape famine and religious conflict. Those early settlers created a community of sod homes topped with prairie grass - references to "strawtown" still turn up in modern-day Pella - on 18,000 acres between the Des Moines and Skunk Rivers. As the town grew, leaders named new streets after their ideals: Liberty, Independence, Union and Peace. Within a few years, Pella residents built stores, sawmills and blacksmith shops, a newspaper and several churches. The Rolscreen Company, later renamed Pella Corporation, began manufacturing windows in 1925, and it was Scholte who donated land for Central College in 1853. Today, 1,600 students are enrolled in the private, four-year liberal arts college.

But what was that about tulips?



Ah yes - thousands (and thousands!) of spring flowers bloom bright for the city's famed three-day Tulip Time festival. It debuted in 1935, and this year's celebration takes place May 3-5. Expect Dutch dancing, street scrubbing demonstrations, and the Klompen Classic 5K run and walk. Attendees also won't want to miss the presentation of the tulip queen and her court, or the day and

"Anyone can enjoy a taste of Pella by going to the different

In the shadow of the windmill sits the Molengracht, a huge downtown plaza with a Dutch-style canal and even a working drawbridge! Shops and businesses designed to replicate those in the Netherlands line the Molengracht,

[illegible]



anchored by the 38-room Royal Amsterdam Hotel and Monarchs Restaurant and Lounge. Vandevoort says the European-themed hotel has become quite popular since its 2001 opening, and she recommends reserving rooms well in advance of a visit.

A more recent addition to Pella's hotel scene is The Cheesemaker's Inn. Frisian Farms' Jason Bandstra and his wife, Valerie, opened the bed and breakfast in the Bandstra family's farmhouse in 2010. Several independent inns and chain hotels offer other affordable accommodations throughout town, and larger groups can rent rooms at Central College between June and mid-August.

The college is also a cultural hub for the Pella community, hosting concerts, art exhibits, theater performances, book readings, sports, and other events during the academic year. Take a quick loop around the school's sidewalks to view outdoor art, an organic garden and several Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design- (LEED) certified buildings. Don't forget to stop for photos on the iconic bridge that crosses the pond in the center of campus.

Three blocks north of Central, West Market Park makes a great picnic spot with sheltered tables and a large wooden playground. North of the town square, Sunken Gardens Park has a windmill, a wooden shoe-shaped pond and 15,000 tulips that are particularly popular during the spring bloom. And, on

Continued on next page

Pella Resources

Fun

Best of Thymes • 615 Franklin St. •
bestofthymes.vpweb.com • 641-628-3332

Big Rock Park • Big Rock Road • www.cityofpella.com

Bos Landen Golf Club • 2411 Bos Landen Drive •
www.boslanden.com • 641-628-4625

Central College • 812 University •
www.central.edu • 877-462-3687

Cordova Park • www2.mvr.usace.army.mil/
RedRock/Recreation/Cabins.cfm

De Pelikaan • 627 Franklin St. • dutchmillinn.com/page/148x9/De_Pelikaan.html •
641-628-9479

EmBellish • 605 Franklin St. •
www.embellishpella.com • 641-628-1738

Molengracht • www.molengracht.com •
641-628-2246

Pella Convention and Visitors Bureau • 818
Washington St. • www.pella.org • 888-746-3882

Pella Historical Village • 507 Franklin St. •
www.pellatuliptime.com/historical-village •
641-628-4311

Royal Amsterdam Hotel • 701 East 1st St. •
www.royalamsterdam.com • 641-620-8400

Red Rock Lake Association •
www.redrocklakeassociation.org

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Continued from previous page

the northwest corner of Pella, Big Rock Park boasts a picturesque 83 acres of trees, trails and streams. Hiking and biking are popular here, and children can burn off energy while skipping stones and climbing rocks.

For grownups, downtown Pella promises a charming assortment of shops and galleries such as EmBellish, which carries jewelry and women's accessories, and the home and gift store Best of Thymes. De Pelikaan features an array of Dutch pottery, linens, Delft tiles and, yes, even wooden shoes.

There's also golf, just a short swing away at Bos Landen. Golf Digest has recognized the 18-hole course for its affordability and great design. With Lake Red Rock only a few minutes down the road, it's easy to follow a round with a sunset walk along the water – a perfect only-in-Pella way to end a vacation.

During her four years at Central College, Renee Brincks passed countless afternoons at North Overlook Beach, learned to correctly pronounce "poffertjes," built windows at Pella Corporation and ate her weight in Dutch letters.

Fun, continued.

Sunken Gardens Park • 1110 Main St. • www.cityofpella.com

The Cheesemaker's Inn • 420 Idaho Drive • www.cheesemakersinn.com • 800-720-6321

Tulip Time • www.pellatuliptime.com • 641-628-4311

Vermeer Museum and Global Pavilion • 2110 Vermeer Road East • www2.vermeer.com/vermeer/LA/en/N/about_us/history

Vermeer Windmill • 714 East 1st St. • www.pellatuliptime.com/historical-village/vermeer-mill • 641-628-4311

West Market Park • 1008 Liberty St. • www.cityofpella.com

Continued on next page

Pella: Yes, There's Fun Post-Spring Tulips!

With so many attractions within 30 miles of Pella, why not stay a few extra days and explore? Cross Red Rock Dam and head southwest to Knoxville, where the sprint car season kicks off in April at the Knoxville Raceway. The half-mile dirt track hosts the Sprint Car National Championships each August, and the National Sprint Car Hall of Fame and Museum showcases the sport's history throughout the year. Don't miss Peace Tree Brewing Co., which pours popular craft brews like Hop Wrangler IPA and Cornucopia, a sweet corn-spiked seasonal favorite, at its downtown taproom.


To taste local wines, take Highway 163 from Pella towards Leighton's Tassel Ridge Winery. Free winery tours walk guests through the production process, and the visitor gallery offers views of the wine cellar and crushpad. Follow 163 in the opposite direction for the Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge near Prairie City. Stop by the Prairie Learning Center for an introduction; then, follow the trails through thousands of acres of restored tallgrass prairie or drive through an 800-acre bison enclosure.

And don't miss another fun time July 13-15, when local groups will present the corresponding Summer Fest and Lake Red Rock Balloon Fest events at various locations in Pella and around Red Rock Lake. In addition to sand castle builds, kayak competitions, cycling races, a five-kilometer run and live music, the weekend will feature more than 30 hot air balloons lifting off over the water.

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Oskaloosa • www.frisianfarms.com •
641-673-3306**

**George's Pizza • 629 Franklin St. •
641-628-2802**

**In't Veld's Meat Market • 820 Main St. •
www.intvelds.com • 641-628-3440**

**Jaarsma Bakery • www.jaarsmabakery.com •
727 Franklin St. • 641-628-2940**

Monarchs Lounge • 705 East 1st St. • www.royalamsterdam.com/cafe • 641-628-1633

**Smokey Row Coffee • 639 Franklin St •
www.smokeyrow.com/stores/pella •
641-621-0008**

**Ulrich's Meat Market • 715 Franklin St. •
www.ulrichsmeatmarket.com •
641-628-2771**

**Vander Ploeg Bakery • 711 Franklin St. •
www.vanderploegbakery.com • 641-628-2293**

**Windmill Cafe • 709 Franklin St. •
641-621-1800**

**Down the Road
Knoxville Nationals •
www.knoxvillraceway.com**

**Knoxville Raceway • 1000 North Lincoln St.,
Knoxville • www.knoxvillraceway.com •
641-842-5431**

**Lake Red Rock Balloon Fest •
www.lakeredrockballoonfest.com**

**National Sprint Car Hall of Fame and Museum
• One Sprint Capital Place, Knoxville •
www.sprintcarhof.com • 641-842-6176**

**Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge • 9981
Pacific St., Prairie City • www.tallgrass.org •
515-994-3400**



**Peace Tree Brewing
Co. • 107 West Main
St., Knoxville • [www. peacetreebrewing.com](http://www.peacetreebrewing.com) •
641-842-2739**

**Tassel Ridge Winery
• 1681 220th St.,
Leighton •
www.tasselridge.com •
641-672-9463**



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